The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 20, Vol. ii.] BELFAST, AUGUST 1st, 1882, [For Gratuitous Circulation

WE have to acknowledge, in response to our appeal last month, that Mr. C. Cochrane, of Stourbridge, has sent one guinea, and Mr. W. Dempster, of Blackrock, Co. Dublin, has sent 3s., in aid of the publication and gratuitous circulation of the *Chronicle and Index*. There are, doubtless, others who will follow the example thus set.

THE month of July is not generally one of great activity in Church matters. After the busy gatherings of June there usually follows a period of rest. Ministers are away on their holidays; children are home from school, families troop down to the sea-side, and many pews in the churches are vacant. So it was in the month just ended. We hope that the best use will be made of the period of rest, and that when the home-gatherings come again, we shall all be found ready and willing to enter upon renewed activities.

BUT our Committee have met as usual, and we have kept our Depository well supplied with books. Dr. Freeman Clarke's Sermon at the British and Foreign Anniversary, Mr. Street's Sermon on "What do I live for?" Professor Selby's "Natural Religion," Mr. Hopps' "Recollections," have been most sought for; while Theodore Parker's books still command a steady sale; and the general literature of the Free Churches is in steady demand. The Committee are ever on the alert to provide such books as are most likely to be useful and acceptable.

WE hear of an attempt having been made to obtain a room wherein to hold Sunday Services, during the Summer, in Bangor, Co. Down; but, up to the present time, without success. Perhaps, if a room had been sought for earlier, one might have been found. But we would remind our friends that the sands of the sea-shore are open to all, and that there are many paths and convenient spots along the coast where an out-door service might be held. Only, in this case, many customary formalities must be laid aside, and the Preacher's manuscript must be kept in his pocket. We should like to see some of our friends expounding their principles by the sea-shore. Never mind the room, try the greater temple under the blue sky, and let the waves sing their grand psalmody. We have many friends down at Newcastle, and Portrush also; could not something be attempted at these places?

WE notice, with much interest, a great out-door missionary work going on just now in North East Lancashire. The Unitarian Ministers of that district, backed up by their best laymen, have been, and still are, holding special open air services in Burnley, Accrington, Newchurch, Rawtenstall, Padiham, and other places; and we learn that many of these services have been attended by upwards of a thousand people. They have been of a most interesting character, and the addresses delivered by the various speakers have been listened to with the most respectful attention. Special hymns have been printed for these services, and a considerable amount of interest has been excited throughout the district. We feel sure that good results will follow, and we heartily congratulate the energetic band of Ministers and Laymen who have originated and are carrying on this good work. We do not know the names of the Laymen who have thus laboured on behalf of Free Religion; but we gladly mention, with honour, the names of the energetic Ministers who are engaged in the good work. These are the Revs. T. Leyland, C. J. Street, M.A., G. V. Mills, H. Hill, T. Harrison, and the active Secretary of the Special Services, Mr. Lazenby of Newchurch.

Two Belfast men are just admitted to Manchester New College, London; one of them, Mr. James Stronge, who has just completed, with distinction, three years' study at the Home Missionary Board; and the other, Mr. Murray Blair, who comes to us out of another denomination. We have great hopes that both young men will prove themselves distinguished Students and worthy Ministers in our Free Churches. While the Non-Subscribing Association continue to discuss what they will do with the Profes-

sorial Fund, the young men are acting in the spirit of Mr. Nelson's suggestions, and going to the best sources in England for their education. Our good wishes go with them.

On Tuesday, 25th July, the children of the Unitarian Sunday School at Rademon, accompanied by many friends, held their annual excursion, and went to Newcastle. On arrival there they proceeded to the Sandbanks, where a plentiful refreshment was partaken of; after which they marched, headed by the Crossgar Junior Flute Band, to the beautifully situated grounds surrounding Donard Lodge, the residence of Lady Annesley, who had graciously granted permission for the children to enter her Ladyship's demesne. Here a very pleasant afternoon was spent with amusements of various kinds—games, races, &c.—which the children entered into with zest and relish. On the return march a halt was made before Donard Lodge, and a vote of thanks to Lady Annesley proposed by the Rev. J. A. Kelly. Three cheers having been given for Lady Annesley and the National Anthem having been sung, the procession wended its way to the Sandbanks, where refreshments were again partaken of. At half-past six o'clock the railway station was reached, and a few minutes afterwards the train moved out, carrying its happy freight, well pleased with their day's outing.

Many of our readers will remember the origin of Mountpottinger Church. In the eating-room connected with Dr. Ritchie's works it had its humble inception. The very poor children of the district were gathered together on a Sunday, in that place, and under Mr. M'Calmont's zealous superintendence, a staff of teachers did their best to do these children good. Next, the parents of these children were invited to Service with the children. They came; Mr. Street and others conducting the Services. As they seemed likely to grow into a permanent Congregation, Dr. Ritchie offered the people a plot of ground if they would erect a Building on it for "the worship of God and the promotion of Education." The people set to work, and a neat stone building was erected in the very heart of Mountpottinger, on the most central site in the district. This was about seven years ago. Since then, first under the Rev. D. Thompson's ministry (now of Dromore), and then under the Rev. J. J. Wright's, the School and Church have been missionaries to the children and people of the neighbourhood. Belfast has grown, but in no part of it, perhaps, has it grown more greatly than in the Mountpottinger district, of late years. Families are continually coming into the town from the country to settle there for the sake of work. Upwards of one hundred of these families now form Mountpottinger Church, while nearly one hundred and fifty children make the School. Fortunately for the Church it has so many "poor" to minister to. There are, at least, forty families who are able to contribute little or nothing, in the way of money to the Church; nay, indeed, most of these really need, very often, to receive help, in the way of money, from the Church. Until recently there was a debt upon the building of £250. Since Mr. Wright came to Mountpottinger the debt has been completely wiped off. About £15 have been raised for a library, £8 for Martineau's new Hymnal, £8 for asphalting, &c., &c.; and now the Congregation is making a spirited effort to complete the Church, by putting in Pews, &c. This offer has been made to the people:—Two friends—S. C. Davidson, Esq., and Thomas Haye Ritchie, Esq. (son of Dr. Ritchie)—have promised to put up, at their own expense, a separate schoolroom for the children in the rear of the present building, *on condition* that £200 be raised by the people to put pews, &c., into the Church. Already we note nearly £180 of this has been got—£140 of it locally and among the Congregation, the rest from friends at a distance. We commend this effort to the generosity of our thousand readers in the North of Ireland, as well as Scotland and England. Our Mountpottinger friends want to get the work done during the Summer, but, by the conditions, they cannot begin till the whole £200 are in hand. We shall be glad to acknowledge any subscriptions in these columns.

On Sunday afternoon, July the 9th, at Four o'clock, the Annual Floral Service was held at Mountpottinger. The Church was beautifully adorned with greeneries and flowers. The four hymns—"Father from Thy Throne of Glory;" "Little Beam of Rosy Light;" "Flowers of all Seasons;" "Work and Prayer," were exceedingly well sung by the children and heartily joined in by the Congregation. The Church was filled in every part. The Rev. J. C. Street

opened the service, Mr. C. Wright, of Manchester, assisted, and Rev. J. J. Wright gave the address to the children on "Beauty and Duty." A special collection was taken up to help to defray the expenses of the Children's Excursion to Craigavad, on August 5th.

PROPOSED READING SOCIETY.

Dear Sir,

I have great pleasure in calling your attention to a proposed Reading Society, in connection with the Unitarian Depository.

Many of us have long felt that such a society is needed. Scarcely a month passes but some earnest book is published in Europe or America, touching our religious thought and life. Some of these books we would at least like to see and read. But these are the books that are not to be had from any library in town, and the prices of these books are often such as to make us hesitate, even were we able, to purchase them for ourselves.

Besides this there are many such books that we may only want to read over, and by this means we often discover for ourselves what are the books we would like to buy and keep upon our own shelves.

The proposed Reading Society is to enable us, by combination, for a few shillings a year, to read the kind of books already mentioned.

A Special Committee was appointed some time ago to consider the matter, and the following are some of its suggestions, approved by the Executive Committee :—

"That a Reading Society should be established in connection with the Depository, provided a sufficient number of persons are willing to support it—suggest that the fixed yearly subscription should not exceed 5s. each—that the Unitarian Society should contribute towards the formation of the library, each year, an amount equal to the total amount of the yearly subscription—all books purchased by the Reading Society to be and remain the property of the Unitarian Society—the books to be supplied to the library to be restricted entirely to books on religious subjects—any member of the Reading Society may suggest desirable books—each subscriber to be entitled to require any book to be purchased not exceeding the amount of his subscription, and two or more members can join in the requisition, so that the joint subscriptions amount to the price of the book required."

The Committee will be quite willing to consider any further suggestions. There will be facilities by which our country friends may obtain books on any day at the Depository.

May I place your name on the list of members for this Reading Society?

Respectfully yours,

J. J. WRIGHT, Hon. Sec. *pro tem.*

16, Queen's Arcade, Belfast.

The above circular was sent out some time ago to a number of friends likely to be interested in such a scheme. Many favourable replies were received. But, in consequence of the removal of our stock to the new premises in Queen's Arcade, the matter had to wait for a little time. We have now got comfortably fixed in our new place, and intend to start the Reading Society about September. We shall communicate at an early date with those friends whose names we have already received; and any new names sent in at once will be added to our list.

BOOK NOTICES.

A Small Book of Great Thoughts: Compilations on Piety and Morality. By Peter Dean.

The choicest book that has come to our Depository counter during the month is "Compilations on Piety and Morality," by Peter Dean. It is, indeed, to quote its motto, "a small book of great thoughts." Mr. Dean will be known to many of our readers as the author of a popular "Life of Theodore Parker." They will join with us, we are sure, in thanking him for giving us such a book as this latest. Most Unitarians in the present feel themselves bound to believe that God's inspirations have not been confined to any race or time. Through other souls besides those of Hebrew Prophets and Christian Evangelists, the Spirit of the Eternal has manifested itself, and in other books besides the Old and New Testaments, these operations of God in the human soul have been recorded. Mr. Dean believes this. He has acted on it in his pulpit ministrations, at Walsall, by reading as lessons, in the religious services, passages selected from the sacred books of all nations, including the sacred writings of our own English nation—

writings which are more rich and abundant in our literature than many of us might imagine. But these spiritual classics lie scattered in many books and in many languages. They have, at least, to be searched for, and require some fine tact or discernment in selecting. For doing this work, which however tedious sometimes, we are quite sure he has done with delight and love, we are truly indebted to Mr. Dean.

The Compilations extend from as far back as 468 B.C. down to as late as 1825 A.D. They fall into three groups, viz. :—(1) Eminent Catholics, (2) Eminent Protestants, (3) Eminent Non-Christians. Among the first we find selections from St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, Thomas à Kempis, St. Francis de Sales, Pascal, Fenelon, St. Gregory, St. Basil, Tauler. Among the second we have Lord Bacon, Bishop Hall, Quarles, Thomas Fuller, Sir Thomas Browne, Owen Feltham, Whichcote, Jeremy Taylor, Richard Baxter, Flavel, Barrow, South, Dodsley, Jean Paul Richter. And among the third group we meet Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. When we have mentioned these names, and also intimate that on an average there are two or three pages of extracts from each writer, our readers will see that the material book itself is not so "small" after all, except as compared with the spiritual dimensions of the book which are so "great." And we need hardly say that there is not a page one can turn to without meeting a great thought, a noble, striking, or quaint expression. There is too

> ". . . Wide wandering for the greediest eye
> To peer about upon variety."

Some of our Ministers already read Religious Lessons in the pulpit from other books than the Bible, such as the "Anthology," "Thomas à Kempis," "the Psalms of Rowland Williams," &c., &c. They do this in conscientious obedience to the conviction that we are guilty of ingratitude to God, if we refuse to make use of all but one (the Bible) means by which He has communicated with humanity. But our Ministers often experience a difficulty in finding such lessons as they need. In Mr. Dean's book they will have something to the purpose. But apart altogether from such a limited use, these "Compilations on Piety and Morality" are worthy of, and will surely have, a wider usefulness. We regret to say it, but there is no good done by blinking the fact—the Bible is not read in our homes as it once was. Either the transient controversies concerning its authority, or the hitherto superstitious use of its contents, or some such causes, seem to have had the effect of making the Bible less read in private. And with this danger:—Our spiritual or religious life, wanting its pabulum and stimulus, is liable to droop and decay. A book is one of the best means of culturing either the mental or spiritual nature. But it must be a book to which we turn with desire. Now, if, honestly, large numbers cannot turn to the Bible with earnest desire nowadays, and if they yet feel how natural and good a thing it is, nay, how necessary a thing it is, to nourish the spiritual nature, to such these "Compilations" will be of wonderful service. To read this book in privacy, to read it within the family circle, or even to read it in an adult class at school, would bring great benefit to all who read and all who hear. And it may be with this result, as Mr. Dean confesses has been his case, they may go back with desire to the Bible by and by again and feel that they find in it, after all, the fullest and richest records of God's many inspirations.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked his son of Herder, as he lay in the parched weariness of his last illness. And Herder answered: "Give me a great thought, that I may quicken myself with it." What Herder desired, this book does.

We ought to add that it is neatly printed and tastefully bound. This Book, well bound, may be had at the Depository for 1s. 3d.

Nature and Life; and *The Life that Now Is.* In one Volume. By ROBERT COLLYER, of New York.

"BUT as for Robert Collyer—he's a brick!" Such was the phrase, more expressive than elegant, perhaps, in which a Bostonian, writing to a friend of ours, uttered his admiration for the author of these Sermons. We need write little commendation of anything that comes from the large brain and generous heart of Robert Collyer. His Yorkshire robustness, his blacksmith's strength, his broad human sympathies, and withal his fine spiritual touch and gospel of cheerfulness are known not only in Chicago and New York but here on these islands, and beyond the confines of our Unitarian borders. We need only intimate to our readers that Robert Collyer's two books, which have before been sold at a higher price, are now to be had, thanks to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, bound together for 1s. 10d.

SELECTIONS.

THE FIVE KNAVES.

(AN ORIENTAL TALE.)

Once on a time in Hindostan,
A thief conceived a cunning plan
(So potent is the voice of Hope)
To save his throttle from the rope.
Though now the day was drawing nigh
When he by law was doomed to die,
He bade the jailor tell the king
He fain would show a wondrous thing,—
A precious secret fairly worth
The ear of any prince on earth.
And now the culprit being led
Into the Royal presence, said—
"This golden coin which here you see
If planted will become a tree
Whose fruit—increased a hundredfold—
Will be, like this, the purest gold.
I pray your majesty to try
If this be true before I die."
With this the king and courtiers went
Into the garden with intent
To plant the curious coin of gold;
But now, when all was ready, "Hold!"
Exclaimed the thief, "This hand of mine
Would surely spoil our whole design;
The hand that plants the gold must be
(Else all is nought) entirely free
From stain of fraud; and so I pray
Your gracious majesty will lay
The seed in earth." "Yes—no—in sooth,"
The king replied, "for in my youth
I pilfered from my sire; some stain,
For all my sorrow, may remain.
My good prime minister is here,
His hand, no doubt, is wholly clear
Of any taint." "Nay," he replied,
"That's more than I can well decide;
As tax receiver—now—I may
Have kept a trifle, so I pray
To be excused, for prudence' sake:
And let our commissary take
The coin in hand. Sure that were best,
For he, no doubt, can stand the test."
"Faith," said the commissary, "I
Would rather not, I can't deny
My good intent; but since I pay
Large sums of money every day
For soldiers, sailors, and a horde
Of spies, I wouldn't give my word
I have not kept a small amount
Not entered in my book account;
Since, then, an error—e'en the least—
Would spoil the charm, pray let the priest
Proceed to plant the coin of gold."
"Nay that, I fear, would be o'er bold,"
Replied his reverence; "I deal
In tithes and sacrificial dues,
And so I beg you will excuse
My sharing in a work like this,
Where nothing must be done amiss."
"Then," said the thief, "Since no man here,
As we have learned, is wholly clear
Of knavish tricks, I ask you whether
We should not all be hung together?"
The monarch, laughing, made reply—
"Why, yes, if every rogue must die.
Well, since we are five knaves confessed,
I pardon you and spare the rest."

—*John G. Saxe.*

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with a man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture, a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws.

Huxley.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF TWENTY SUNDAY AFTERNOON ADDRESSES. By John Page Hopps. Price 5d.

Circulation of the *Chronicle and Index.*

There must be many friends, who regularly receive a copy of the *Chronicle and Index*, who would be glad of an opportunity of contributing a small amount to aid in defraying the cost of its publication and circulation. We should be glad to receive such aid, in any amounts, however small. Contributions will be gladly received by Rev. J. C, Street, Unitarian Depository, Queen's Arcade, Belfast.

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